



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

EXPLORING IMPACT OF K-POP CELEBRITY WORSHIP ON WELL-BEING AND SELF-EFFICACY OF YOUNG ADULTS IN FCSHD

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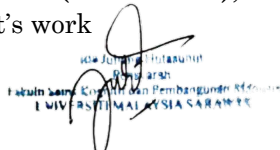
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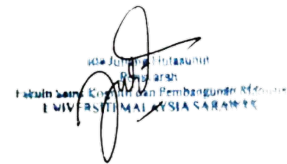
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**EXPLORING IMPACT OF K-POP CELEBRITY WORSHIP ON WELL-BEING AND
SELF-EFFICACY OF YOUNG ADULTS IN FCSHD**


NAJAH KHALIQAH BINTI ABDUL KHALID

This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
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Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
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Abstract

K-Pop has become the global phenomenon in the past decade. K-pop fans can be found easily these days as the emerging of fast-paced internet and technologies. This qualitative study aims to explore the impacts of K-pop celebrity worship on the young adults' well-being and self-efficacy. Through semi-structured interviews, the participants experiences while doing celebrity worship are explored as well as the factors that causes them to be a K-pop fans are also explored. This study has found that the factors that cause young adults to be a K-Pop fans are music genre, messages in the music, appreciation of hard work, K-pop contents and appearance. K-pop celebrity worship have given positive impact towards the young adults' well - being. The impact of celebrity worship on the young adults' self-efficacy has benefitted them in a way of increasing their self-efficacy.

Keywords: K-pop, celebrity worship, well-being, self-efficacy

K-Pop telah menjadi fenomena global sejak sedekad yang lalu. Peminat K-pop boleh ditemui dengan mudah pada hari ini kerana kemunculan Internet dan teknologi yang pantas. Kajian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk meneroka kesan K-pop *celebrity worship* terhadap kesejahteraan dan efikasi sendiri golongan dewasa muda. Menerusi temu bual separa berstruktur, pengalaman peserta semasa melakukan *celebrity worship* dikupas selain faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan mereka menjadi peminat K-pop turut diterokai. Kajian ini mendapati faktor yang menyebabkan golongan muda menjadi peminat K-Pop ialah genre muzik, mesej dalam muzik, penghargaan terhadap kerja keras, kandungan K-pop dan penampilan. K-pop *celebrity worship* telah memberi impak positif terhadap kesejahteraan golongan dewasa muda. Kesan K-pop *celebrity worship* terhadap efikasi sendiri golongan dewasa muda telah memberi manfaat kepada mereka dalam cara meningkatkan efikasi sendiri mereka

CHAPTER 1

This chapter describes the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, the significance of the study, the definitions of terms and the summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

The word “Hallyu,” or “Korean Wave,” is used to explain the spread of South Korean popular culture and media worldwide. The emergence of the K-Pop scene in Malaysia has been expanding for the past decade. According to figures compiled by Twitter and fandom data observatory K-pop Radar, Malaysian K-pop fans placed seventh for K-pop-related conversations on Twitter in terms of tweet volume (Zi, 2020a). This shows that there is a lot of K-Pop fan in Malaysia. The phenomenon has entered the Malaysian scene lately. In 2017, after the death of Jong Hyun, a member of the K-Pop group, Malaysian K-Pop fans held a candlelight vigil in memory of the late singer (Omar, 2017). In South Korea, there is a fan culture where fans organise a range of events that bring fans together via their shared love and devotion to their idols. Giving food trucks to the idols' performance locations, sending birthday presents, and organising advertisements specific to the idol are all examples of events (Yang, 2017). In the past three years, there have been many “birthday events” held in cafes by K-Pop fans in Malaysia to celebrate their favourite idols' birthdays (Zi, 2020b).

K-Pop is not a new phenomenon in Malaysia in the past decade. Celebrity worship is one of the ways that people use to cope with distress from life—a celebrity worshiper, e.g., K-pop fans. “K-pop fan” has a unique meaning beyond a music genre lover. A para-social interaction can provide a platform for escapism and emotional and motivational support. Although the relationship between a fan and an idol is typically one-sided, it has benefited the

fan somehow (Mohd Jenol & Ahmad Pazil, 2020). Malaysian social media debate about the Korean Wave is more hostile than Indonesian discourse. Malaysians expressed a range of negative even though some have positive comments on it. Phrases such as pigs, satan's worshippers, and plastics are often used to criticise devoted fans and Korean artists (Lee et al. 2020).

Turning celebrities and famous people into inspiration to become successful have become an everyday norm in our society. This is because they are often displayed on tv screens and the internet, influencing the public. Celebrities can serve as a source of inspiration as they inspire people of all ages and raise awareness about prominent issues. On the other hand, many celebrities are prone to unhealthy habits such as substance misuse. They are also often involved in controversies, including family matters or provocative statements on sensitive topics.

With the rise in living standards and the popularity of the internet, the phenomenon of celebrity worship has become more prevalent and passionate, with fans buying magazines and tickets to celebrity performances, forming fan clubs to support and promote stars, and even attacking opposing fan groups on the internet.

Therefore, in this research, the researcher aims to understand how K-Pop celebrity worship helps young adults have a better quality of life in terms of well-being and self-efficacy and provide information to the public on the positive sides of celebrity worshipping.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the past twenty years, many studies have investigated celebrity worship and mainly focused on the adverse effect. Maltby et al. (2001) has conducted a survey of celebrity worshipping and psychological well-being that emphasise negative components like social dysfunction, depression, and anxiety. Maltby et al. (2006) studied celebrity worshipping with a clinical personality context investigating the obsessive-compulsive behaviour, tendency to

fantasise, dissociation, and ego identity. Swami et al., 2011 study the effect of worship on body dissatisfaction. Criminality activity and addiction due to intense celebrity worshipping was conducted by Sheridan et al. (2006). McCutcheon et al. (2016) studied celebrity worship and five-factor personality and followed the research of proneness to fantasise and delusional thinking.

Prospective studies are needed to investigate how celebrity worship and its factors evolve. There is a noteworthy scarcity of qualitative research on celebrity worship in general. Future research should examine employing qualitative methodologies to provide fans with a “voice” in the study and investigate fans’ perceptions of celebrity worship (Brooks, 2021). It is noticeable that most of the study on celebrity worship was done in Western countries, and in Asian countries, most studies were done in Indonesia. By conducting the present study, the researcher aimed to explore the impact of celebrity worship on self-efficacy and psychological well-being in the context of celebrity worship in K-Pop of young adult fans in Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD).

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the factor of K-Pop celebrity worship in young adults in FCSHD.
2. To identify the impacts of K-Pop celebrity worship on young adults’ well-being.
3. To identify the impacts of K-Pop celebrity worship on young adults’ self-efficacy.

1.4 Research Question

1. What factors caused young adults to be involved in K-Pop celebrity worship?
2. What are the impacts of K-Pop celebrity worship on young adults’ well-being?
3. What are the impacts of K-Pop celebrity worship on young adults’ self-efficacy?

1.5 Significance of Study

1.5.1 Knowledge

The present study's findings are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of well-being. Providing input for positive psychology about the factors that can cause individuals or specifically early adults who are K-Pop fans who are doing Celebrity Worship. Moreover, this study can also be guidelines for further qualitative research on celebrity worship by understanding the impact on self-efficacy and well-being.

1.5.2 Practitioner

The present study's findings will contribute to the benefit of society considering that positive psychology is encouraging people to discover what leads them to live more meaningful lives can decipher to have better-coping strategies for addressing mental illness, adjusting negative behaviours, and increasing well-being and productivity. Furthermore, providing rich information about the antecedent factors and impact of celebrity worship.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Celebrity Worship

According to the Cambridge dictionary, worship in a non-religious context is an act of loving, respecting, and admiring someone or something very much often without noticing the bad qualities of the individual or thing. In Xia et al. (2021) review of celebrity worship, worship, according to some scholars, is the act of showing dedication, commitment, and love to a media character. According to some experts, celebrity worship begins with the formation of devotion for media figures. The major trait is a great attachment to the figures they respect and a readiness to invest time, money, and freedom for them.

In the present study, the researcher defines celebrity worship as devoting time and money to support their favourite celebrity. As well as defining celebrity worship as a term of considering themselves a fan.

1.6.2 K-Pop

K-pop is a part of the "Korean Wave," also known as Hallyu, which refers to the global appeal of Korean pop culture, including Korean TV series, music, and films. From South China Morning Post, over the last few decades, English-language media has popularised the term "K-pop," which is typically used as a catch-all term to refer to not only South Korean pop music but also that created by young, multitalented pop idols who are managed by entertainment labels and engage intensely with their fandom audiences (Herman, 2020).

In the present study, the researcher will be referring K-Pop as a music genre by Korean idols and the engagement with fans.

1.6.3 Well-Being

The term "well-being" refers to psychological functioning and experience at its best (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to Seligman (2011), in his book noted that:

“Well-being is just like “weather” and “freedom” in its structure: no single measure defines it exhaustively (in jargon, “defines exhaustively” is called “operationalizes”), but several things contribute to it; these are the *elements* of well-being, and each of the elements is a measurable thing.” (pg.15).

1.6.4 Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1977) self-efficacy is defined as a persons’ belief in their ability to carry out the action required to achieve the desired result. However, self-efficacy differs from self-expectancy, in which individuals can have the belief that a particular course of action

would result in specific outcomes. Still, if they have substantial doubts about their ability to undertake the required actions, such doubt does not affect their behaviour. Self-efficacy is one of the most potent motivational predictors of how well an individual will succeed at any effort when combined with the goals they set (Heslin & Klehe, 2006).

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, the significance of the study, the definitions of terms were described. In the next chapter, related past researches, theories for present research will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Several studies investigate the positive impact of celebrity worshipping. In 2003, McCutcheon et al. studied the cognitive profile of celebrity worshippers. Maltby et al., 2004 reviewed cognitive flexibility and social complexity following research done by McCutcheon et al., in 2003. Liu (2013) studied celebrity worship, self-esteem, and religiosity. A study was done by Chueng & Yue (2003a) on celebrity worshipping and identity achievement. Following Chueng & Yue (2003b) performed a study on modelling after luminary and star idols and the development of self-efficacy in adolescents. In recent years, there has been researches done on celebrity worship and self-esteem. Nawardi et al. (2020) researched the quality of life of celebrity worshippers among early adults. They found that celebrity worshippers with a good quality of life align with celebrity worship behaviour. Sitasari et al. (2019) self-esteem and celebrity worship and found a negative relationship between self-esteem and celebrity worship. Zsila et al. (2021) studied individual differences and the connection between celebrity worship and subjective well-being. A negative association was found between the association of celebrity worship. Self-esteem was found slightly more vital for women compared to men. Azzahra and Ariana (2021) found a strong significance between celebrity worship and psychological well-being.

2.2 Celebrity Worship in K-Pop

Individuals with assumed intact identities that become virtually infatuated with celebrities have obsessive behaviour like erotomania delusional condition. This para-social interaction appears to be an unhealthy phenomenon is defined as celebrity worship as described by Maltby et al. (2003).

Most of the recent research on celebrity worship has applied quantitative methods and relating celebrity worship with various variables. For example, Maulida, Viridanda, Nisa and Sari (2021) studied the level of celebrity worship in the BTS and EXO fan communities. Their study found that K-Pop fans in Aceh have an almost similar result for distinct levels of celebrity worship based on Maltby et al. (2006) Celebrity Attitude Scale. The celebrity worship levels were Borderline Pathological, Intense Personal, and Entertainment Social levels. The study by Muslimah (2021) found a difference between men and women in liking K-pop idols according to the level of celebrity worship, where the results are slightly higher in women. However, a study on celebrity worship and body image by Tresna et al. (2021) found that celebrity worshipers with entertainment social level attitudes showed a positive relationship with appearance orientation, while those with borderline pathological attitudes showed a negative correlation between the level of celebrity worship and body image satisfaction. Study on self-maturity and celebrity worship, Novitasri (2021) found a negative correlation between maturity and celebrity worship.

A study on purchases of BTS merchandise in Kebumen by Rahyuni, (2021) reported that celebrity worship influences compulsive buying. A positive relationship was found between celebrity worship and compulsive buying of BTS merchandise. Sitasari et al. (2021) studied the relationship between religiosity and celebrity worship and found a negative correlation between religiosity and celebrity worship in 2PM boyband fan communities.

2.2.1 Theory Related (Level of Worship)

Three levels of celebrity worshipers attitude based on Celebrity Attitude Scale designed by McCutcheon (2002); Low levels of celebrity worship have Entertainment-social value, as showed by items like “My friends and I like to discuss what my favourite celebrity has done,” and “My friends and I like to discuss what my favourite celebrity has done.” The second degree

of celebrity worship is described by more intense-personal feelings, such as “I have frequent thoughts about my celebrity, even when I don’t want to,” and “I have frequent thoughts about my celebrity, even when I don’t want to.” This level depicts people’s passionate and compulsive feelings about celebrities, like the obsessive tendencies of followers that are often discussed in the literature. Borderline-pathological celebrity worship is the most extreme form of celebrity worship. “If I were lucky enough to meet my favourite celebrity and he/she asked me to do anything illegal as a favour, I would probably do it,” says one. This third level is thought to represent a person’s abnormal views and behaviours toward a favourite celebrity (McCutcheon et al., 2016).

2.3 Well Being (Happiness)

Happiness appeared to be the most extensive predictor of K-Pop fandom instead of self-efficacy, which is traditionally associated with Social-Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979 as cited in Laffan, 2021). Higher degrees of K-Pop fans’ devotion were associated with higher levels of happiness, self-esteem, and social connectivity (Laffan, 2021). Adolescents involved in celebrity admiration at Entertainment Social level was found to be significantly related to the adolescents’ life satisfaction (Chia & Poo, 2009). On the other hand, a study by Maltby et al. (2004) and Reeves et al. (2012) found that the Intense-Personal level was significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction. In children, higher levels of idolisation are linked to lower levels of sadness, popularity, and academic achievement (Scharf & Levy, 2015). In a study of quality of life, adolescents and young adults who became K-Pop celebrity worship enjoy a high quality of life in all four categories, including physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and the environment (Nawardi et al., 2020; Safithri et al., 2020).

2.3.1 PERMA Model

Martin Seligman proposed the PERMA theory of well-being to find answers about what enables humans to have a flourishing life. PERMA theory comprises five elements that are related to each other.

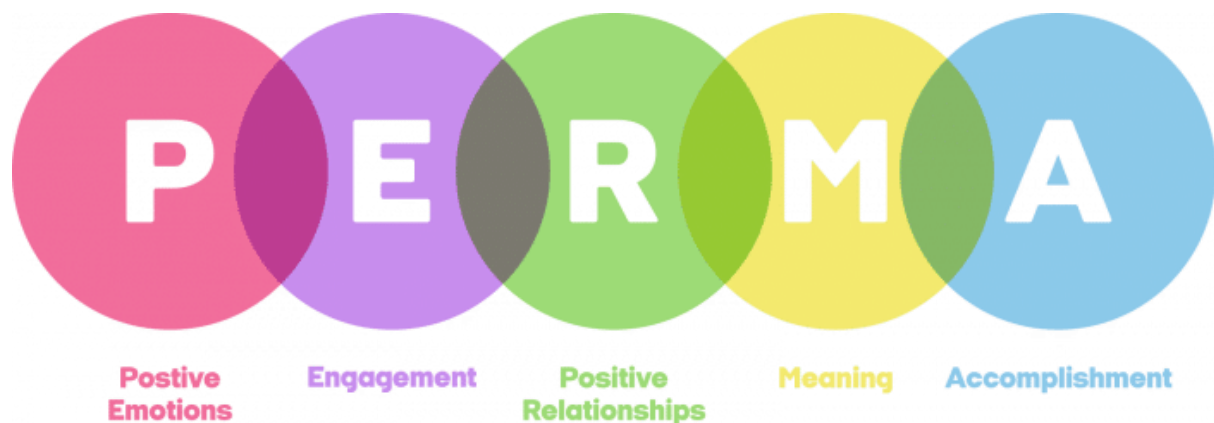


Figure 1 PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011)

Positive Emotion

Positive emotions are mental states characterised by feelings, senses, thoughts, and actions that can generate positive outcomes such as joy, serenity, fulfilment, and contentment (Ching & Chan, 2020). Positive emotions aid us in many ways, including improving our ability to deal with negative emotions or situations when they occur. We may boost our good emotions about the past, present, and future within certain restrictions. Our emotions tend to fluctuate within a range; therefore, positive affectivity is partly heritable. Many people have a tough time feeling happy. By experiencing positive emotion, one is on their way to achieving well-being.

Engagement

A state known as flow occurs when you become fully engaged in an activity, pursuing it solely for the sake of enjoyment while losing track of time. Being involved in various activities allows people to reflect on what they are doing, allowing them to become fully engaged in both positive and unpleasant aspects of life and helping them in developing their emotional, cognitive, and spiritual assets (Slavin et al., 2012).

Relationship

The opportunities of individual can have the feeling of incomparable enjoyment, a deep feeling of meaning and purpose, and immense pride in the sense of achievement by being surrounded by other people. Other people are the best remedy to life's lows and the single most dependable source of happiness (Seligman, 2011).

Meaning

Most people's sense of meaning is related to their values and core beliefs. To have a meaning means that your existence is meaningful and worthwhile while also believing in something bigger than yourself. Research by Fredrickson et al. (2013) states that happiness without purpose denotes a shallow, self-absorbed, or even selfish life. Everything goes smoothly, needs and desires are readily met, and complex or demanding conflicts are avoided. They found that the adversity stress response was deactivated in a person whose happiness and a sense of meaning aligned. From here, happiness and having a sense of meaning overlap in life.

Accomplishment

Accomplishment in its most brief form, and the "achieving life," a life dedicated solely to reaching goals for the sake of obtaining goals. People who lead successful lives are focused

on their work, seek pleasure with passion, and experience positive emotions when they accomplish something. The role of accomplishment in the aspect of well-being theory is because it brings closer to a fuller account of what people select for the sake of it (Seligman, 2011).

One cannot improve well-being only by having positive emotions as it is challenging to stimulate them on its own. Engaging in a relationship without positive emotions, a sense of purpose or meaning, or accomplishment will not lead to a positive relationship. It is impossible to have a positive relationship without engaging. It is not sensible to have a sense of purpose in life if one does not experience positive emotions and accomplishment. A single element cannot promote well-being on its own. All elements are interconnected and work together to strengthen an individual's overall well-being. Therefore, all five elements are related to each other in helping people to achieve well-being.

2.4 Self-Efficacy

There is not much research on celebrity worship and its impact on self-efficacy. However, research by Chueng and Yue (2003b) has found that the self-efficacy of an adolescent who modelled after a luminary idol was higher. Regardless of the level of worship, adolescents who worship star idols tended to have low self-efficacy. Those with higher perceived self-efficacy are supported by alienation and social learning theories. The adolescents' autonomy and potential are maintained as they modelled after idols, which counter the alienation and thus help preserve self-efficacy. Correspondingly modelling luminary idols results in the social learning of the idols' good qualities that boost adolescent self-efficacy. Meanwhile, the finding of adolescent worshippers with lower self-efficacy is supported by the alienation theory predicts that celebrity worship separates worshippers from their true selves, lowering their sense of self-efficacy.

However, a study on the association of celebrity worship and with problematic internet use, maladaptive daydreaming, desire for fame and self-efficacy by Zsila et al. (2018) found that there is no association between celebrity worship and self-efficacy and supported by older findings that unhealthy level of worships is related with self-esteem than feelings of incompetence and insignificance. It is said that celebrity worshippers are linked to having a lack of control over their adoration for a celebrity. Though celebrity worshippers that are not aware of the harm their obsession causes in several aspects of their lives may maintain a sense of competence and self-efficacy. Vally et al. (2021) conducted the same research in the United Arab Emirates and found no correlation between celebrity worship and self-efficacy and however noted that individuals who engage in pathological celebrity worship, on the other hand, tend to have high self-esteem and their sense of self is strengthened by the one-sided connection with the idolised celebrity.

2.4.1 Self-Efficacy Model

According to Albert Bandura social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory, self-efficacy and outcome expectancies are fundamental to behaviour initiation and persistence. Self-efficacy was particularly important for goal setting, implementation, and achievement. Expectations of self-efficacy are crucial since they comprise the conviction that one can successfully start and maintain the behaviour to achieve the desired goal. Self-efficacy affects activity choices, goal planning, behaviour initiation, and coping attempts once the behaviour has begun. Self-efficacy affects result expectations as well. People who have an elevated level of self-efficacy are more likely to see things their way (Lippke, 2020).

Self-Efficacy Model

Self-efficacy expectations are based on four primary sources of information (Bandura, 1977).

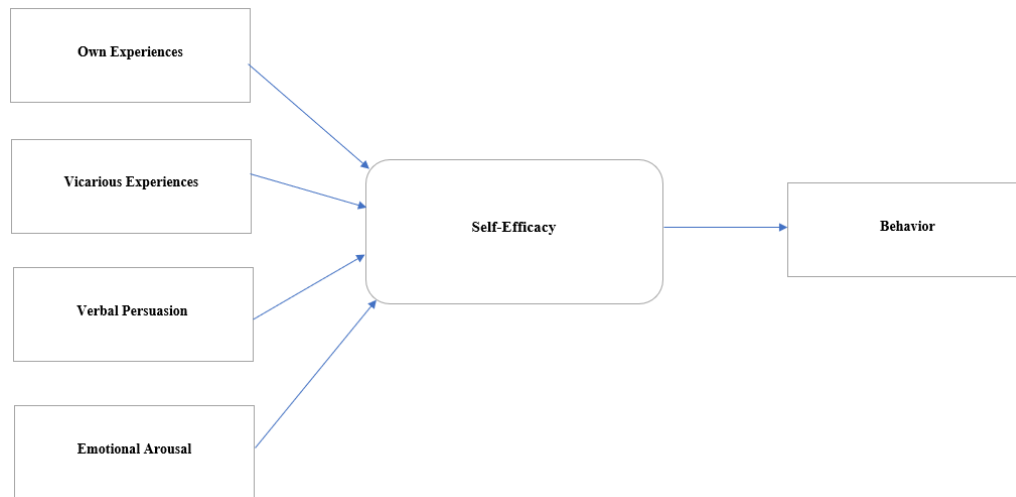


Figure 2 Self-Efficacy Model (Bandura, 1977)

Own experiences

Personal experiences or performance accomplishments are also known as mastery experiences. It has been discovered that personal experiences have the most significant impact on self-efficacy beliefs and, as a result, future behaviour.

Vicarious experiences

All experiences experienced by the individual are included. By studying others and deriving implications about one's action and its predictor, model learning builds on vicarious experiences. The more like the model they observe in other individuals, the more likely it is that the observations will impact the individual.

Verbal persuasion

The third factor, verbal persuasion, is weaker than the first two. Other people, texts, or self-learning can all provide verbal feedback and learning.

Emotional arousal

Physiological condition or emotional arousal is the last and weakest source. If emotional or physiological arousal is related to one's behaviour, it might influence self-efficacy expectations by implying incompetence and uncontrollability.

2.5 Improvement in Present Study

Although there are many studies, the research in qualitative measures of the impact of celebrity worship on well-being and self-efficacy remains limited. Brooks (2021) stated in his review on factors associated with celebrity worship that there is a considerable shortage of qualitative research in the field of celebrity worship.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discusses past research on celebrity worship and related theory for the present study. From the review, it can be inferred that celebrity worship impacts vary depending on different variables. From the related theory, the researchers will adapt it to construct interview questions to fit research questions.